

CLAIMS

1. A floorboard comprising a plurality of elongated wood strips of unequal lengths assembled end to end and side by side, each side being coated with an adhesive, said wood strips being cured together to form said floorboard, each wood strip having two opposite ends, each opposite end being provided with spaced apart fingers so that when two strips of wood are joined end to end, the fingers of a wood strip engage with the fingers of another wood strip.
- 10 2. A floorboard according to claim 1, wherein said wood strips are hardwood.
3. A floorboard according to claim 2, wherein said strips of wood are selected from the group including oak, maple, birch and beech.
- 15 4. A floorboard according to claim 1, wherein said floorboard has a length, a width, a thickness, two opposite ends and two opposite sides, and wherein one of said opposite sides is provided with a shiplap.
5. An apparatus for making a floorboard comprising:
 - 20 a conveyor belt;
an assembly area located at a first portion on the conveyor belt for receiving elongated strips of wood and for assembling said strips of wood end to end and side by side in rows to form a floorboard, said wood strips being longitudinally interconnected with each other with a finger joint;
 - 25 a press located at a second portion on the conveyor belt, downstream from said assembly area, for receiving said floorboard, said press being provided with a heater, with lateral pressure means for exerting lateral pressure on said floorboard with a plate movable between a retracted position and a pressing position and with a stop for stopping a leading end of the floorboard;
 - 30 means for applying longitudinal pressure on said elongated strips of wood when said floorboard is in said press;

holding means;

an output area located at a third portion on the conveyor belt, downstream from said curing area, for receiving said cured floorboard said output area being provided with a holder for holding a portion of said floorboard extending beyond
5 said press; and

a controller for controlling operation of said apparatus.

6. An apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said means for applying longitudinal pressure are a multi-finger joint pressing machine located at the
10 entrance of the curing area, said multi-finger joint pressing machine including a transversal support bar being movable between a retracted position and an operative position, said support bar being provided with a plurality of fingers extending under the support bar and longitudinally towards the output area, whereby when said support bar is in said retracted position, said floorboard can be
15 conveyed into said curing area, and when said support bar is in said operative position, said fingers engage a top portion of said floorboard in order to apply downward and longitudinal pressure to said wood strips and thereby force said finger joints to close.

20 7. An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said support bar is provided with at least one finger for each row of wood strips.

8. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said multi-finger joint pressing machine applies an individual pressure to each row of wood strips of at least 100
25 pounds.

9. An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each finger of said plurality of fingers is provided with an absorber.

30 10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said absorber is a spring.

11. An apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each finger of said plurality of fingers is made of metal.
12. A method of manufacturing a floorboard comprising the steps of:
- 5 (a) providing a plurality of wood strips, each of said wood strips having two opposite ends, each of said ends being provided with spaced apart fingers;
- 10 (b) applying an adhesive to facing sides of adjacent wood strips;
- (c) assembling said wood strips longitudinally to form joints between two wood strips and side by side in rows to form said floorboard;
- 15 (d) conveying said floorboard into a curing area;
- (e) applying longitudinal, horizontal and lateral pressure to said floorboard to press the rows of wood strips against each other and to close the finger joints where said floorboard is said conveying area; and
- (f) removing said floorboard from said conveying area.